

Kitan Magazine



Volume Two

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Kitan Magazine: Volume Two

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Cover picture: A Geisha washing her hair.

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Prologue: Kitan Magazine

Le Minotaur Press of Vancouver is pleased to publish this second volume of ***Kitan*** Magazine which serves to feature the work of remarkable writers, poets & artists.

Kitan means tale in Japanese. This Magazine is about the excitement, adventure, romance, Love and Eros of the Orient.

Kitan Magazine welcomes submissions on a biannual basis.

Please feel free to submit your submissions to

penny_plenty321@yahoo.com

There is no fee to submit. There is no writer's fee provided by the journal for those who submit. The publishing rights remain with the writer.

Kitan Prose:

Who I am ... by Aki Kurosawa

[**Tokyo**] I write using a pseudonym. I write using a pseudonym for a reason. I work for a very larger international firm here in Tokyo.

If my boss here at my job in Tokyo were to know who I am, he would do one of two things, either fire me or try to seduce me.

I need my job ... I don't need a love sick boss ... Yet, I feel compelled to share some of my stories and poetry with you.

My friend Patrick in Vancouver has agreed to help me get my stories and poetry into print. He has also encouraged me to be brave. I met him during a visit to Vancouver. He has promised to keep my identity a secret. I trust him to keep secrets.

I hope you enjoy the stories and poetry I am sharing with you. You will notice how much I enjoy Onsens, Perhaps we shall meet one day at a hot spring?

Oh by the way, if my sister were to read some of these stories she would do one of two things. Either never talk to me again, or do even sensational exploits. After you read about some of her exploits you would probably realize how nice it is to have a brave younger sister.

When I was Much Younger by Aki Kurosawa

When you are young you do foolish things. Hopefully these things don't cause hurt and harm to you or to your friends and your family. Later in life you may come to regret the foolish things you've done. I have done a few things I now regret.

One of the foolish things I did was in high school when I let a girl friend of mine to draw me. She was taking an art course at school and wanted to do figure drawing. I thought nothing about helping her out because she was my friend.

The first time she asked me I agreed to sit before her fully clothed. I was wearing a bright yellow dress. She drew me and then took a picture "for reference purposes." I did not think anything about her taking my picture.

The next time I sat for my girl friend I was in a bathing suit, a rather modest one piece that I wore when I went to the pool or to the beach. It was a dull blue.

She drew several sketches of me but seemed to be unhappy. "I can't see your figure," she said. I was a late bloomer and so there was not much of a figure of me for her to see. I stood before her quite self-conscious of myself, most particularly that I did not have big breasts. She took another picture "for reference purposes."

The third time I came to sit for my girl friend I had come with my dull blue bathing suit. “No, that will not do,” she said. Instead she gave me a two piece bathing suit to wear. It was a rather immodest swim suit. The top was mere triangles and the bottom even less of one. But I had promised her I would sit and so I put the flimsy thing on. This time she asked me to recline on her large bed. I did.

She started to sketch me. She did a few one minute sketches, and I started to feel warm inside of me. Then we went on to two minute sketches. I got more bold with my reclining pose. Instead of keeping my legs together I opened them a bit.

She started to sketch with more enthusiasm. When we got to five minute sketches I don’t know what came over me but I just leaned forward and removed the top of the bathing suit. She smiled and stopped her sketch. “You’re very pretty,” she said. I sort of knew what she was hoping but I was not ready to take off my bottom. She continued sketching while we talked about this and that. She was obviously trying to relax me and set me at ease.

Time seemed to slow to a standstill. It was perhaps because she had slowed her sketching down to a crawl. She was taking her time putting lines to paper, as if she was thinking of something else other than her drawing.

She suddenly stopped and looked at me. “Will you ...” she pointed at the bottoms with her pencil. There was a few seconds of awkward silence as I hesitated. I did.

She spent the next twenty minutes drawing me in several immodest poses. Then I started to get cold and told her so. “Let’s stop,” I said. She grabbed her camera. “Let me take a picture of you for reference purposes.” I just had enough time to bring my legs together and cover my face, then snap! It’s the picture I regret.



That was the last time I posed for my girl-friend.

Contour by Keiko

I studied some art history at university. I also took a few courses on film history and the first one hundred years of photography.

I took these courses as a distraction from my core university program. You can perhaps guess what my major was at university.

I have always liked art. My mother is the film aficionado in our family just as in the past my grandfather and now my sister are the photographers. I told my sister about the secret double life of our grandfather who took pictures and sold them to *Kitan Magazine* in the 1950's.

My sister just doesn't only like to take pictures, she likes to enter photography contests. She likes to photograph people. She has a different artistic sensibility when she photographs women than when she photograph boys (she doesn't call them men ... they are just boys in her eyes).

When she does want to take a photograph of me she has to tell me the purpose. Then I usually only let her take one picture. Yes just one! I challenge her to compose the art work in her camera.

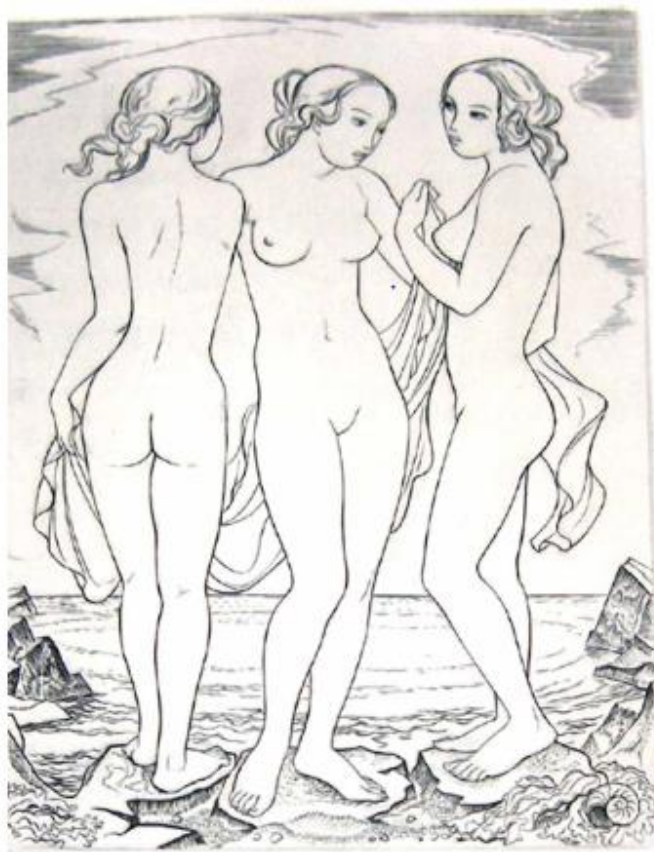
One of the pictures she took of me a few years ago is titled *Contour* ...



I insisted that this picture of me had to be in black and white.

With this picture she won first prize at an amateur photographer's contest. It won her ¥ 500,000. She bought herself a new and better camera.

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Editor in Chief: Patrick Bruskiewich

A Pain in the Neck by Yuki

There are many ways of breaking up with a troublesome boy-friend. You can talk with them face to face, or over the telephone. You can text them and you can send pictures with no words. It has become fashionable to use pictures.

Last year I asked my sister to take this simple picture of me



which I sent to my troublesome boy-friend to tell him to leave me alone. Being such an egotist ... he had to ask me what it meant.

You're a pain in the neck!

My Two Sisters by Aki Kurosawa

When my sister and I are both out and about, I being shorter than she is people think she is older than I am. But in fact I am five years older than she is. She is slim and full of energy, while I am petite and far less energetic than she is (I use to describe myself as short but my friend Rose told me I was actually ‘petite’).

My friend Rose from Paris has made a bet with me. I don’t think she will keep her side of the bet. I don’t know whether I can keep my side. But I will try and my younger sister has said she will help me to. It is almost as if I have two sisters, one I grew up with and the other I met a few years ago. They are both encouraging me to change and try new experiences. They both say I need to change!

My younger sister and I are so different in personality. She is gregarious and can make friends easily, while I am far more reserved, what my maternal grandmother describes as ‘serious.’

I remember when my mother was pregnant with my sister. I was in pre-school the day she was born. I was hoping for a younger brother. When we left for pre-school that morning my mother walked slowly holding her belly. We had to stop several times while her contractions happened. I was worried for my mother but she said everything would be fine. When we got to the pre-school she took a taxi to the hospital. The taxi driver was very kind and helped my mother in his taxi and then sped off. I waved at the taxi and started to cry.

For some reason I thought I would never see my mother ever again. I felt very alone that morning and worried.

When I got home after school there was a note on our door saying I should knock on our neighbor's door. That evening our neighbor looked after me because my mother had not yet returned home from the hospital. My father was away on a business trip, as he often was because he worked as a salesman for a large Japanese electrical equipment company and so there was no one to look after me at home. My mother's parents live in Sapporo and my father's parents in Tokyo. For some reason my parents had not told them my mother was having a second baby. They would find out after my sister was born. I don't know why it was kept a secret.

I remember that evening very well. Our neighbor was a musician in his thirties. I had heard him play Jazz on his piano many times. What my parents and I did not know was that he played piano in the evenings in a night club. We thought he taught piano, for he did have some students who came to study with him. Most were young ladies. He was a handsome young man and loved flirting with girls.

I could not stay at home all by myself so he took me with him to work that evening and I sat at the side of the stage as he played the piano and women danced under spot lights. I had never imagined that people did this. The audience was all middle aged men. I even spotted some friends of my father sitting watching.

Nine o'clock was my usual bed time, but that evening I was not tired at all. I watched in amazement as they took off nearly all their clothes. We returned home by taxi at one in the morning and my mother had yet to come home and so it looked like I would have to stay with my neighbor. But one of the dancers from the night club had come home with us. She must not have been older than twenty.

I knew they wanted to be by themselves. I was not supposed to be left alone, but he was a kind soul he let me sleep in my own bed. She had come home with us not to be with him, but to keep me company that night and look after me. While I slept in my bed she slept in our living room. He knew how worried I was about my mother and so he played for me on the piano until I fell asleep listening to the music through the wall. Instead of playing Jazz, he played classical music and soon I was fast asleep dreaming about dancing on stage under the spot lights.

When I woke up the following morning my mother was back home. She looked very tired. I was happy to see her. "Shush, she said "you will wake your little sister!" She did not ask me about the strange woman she had found sleeping in our apartment.

The Jazz musician and his friend joined us for breakfast and my mother thanked them for 'taking such good care of me.' To this day she does not know I spent the evening at a night club watching strip tease.

My little sister started to cry and so my mother brought her into the kitchen to feed her. Our neighbor disappeared for a few minutes while she breast fed my sister. It was then and there that I learned what breasts were for.

It was only recently that I shared this story with someone. It was with Rose in Paris. She is someone I can talk with. Rose has become a sort of second sister to me, helping me to better understand both myself and my own sister.

Rose challenged me to share the night club story with my sister. When I told my sister the story she said I should tell my mother the story! I said I couldn't and so my sister said she would! I begged her not to and she said she would keep it a secret only if I 'did something fun' with her. My sister thinks I am too serious.

She has pestered me to this so I decided to send it to be published in Patrick's magazine. This way I could tell her the story is no longer just our secret. Both my parents and grandparents can't read English so I doubt they will ever know that the day my sister was born that I spend a night watching strip tease at a night club. My grandparents would be horrified. They are very traditional Japanese grandparents.

But my sister is my sister. Her silence comes with a price.

Now that I am past my thirtieth birthday I want to find a husband and settled down. I have not been all that successful with my boyfriends. I have had two

or three since high school and they have all been long term relationships. But when I fall out of love I go years before I start dating again.

My sister, on the other hand has had dozens of boyfriends, so many that I have lost count and so has she. Her relationships are always short and intense. She says she will help me find a husband. Now closer than ever before.

It has only been recently that she told me why she has had so many boyfriends. She refuses to go to bed with them! I had thought she had but it seems I have been a ‘bad’ girl while she has been a ‘good’ one. She wants to wait until she is married. And so she has been out enjoying her life without ever sharing a bed with her boyfriends.

When I asked her about this she told me a story about my parents that I did not know about.

I knew my parents first met during the Sapporo Winter Olympics in 1972 when she was sixteen and he was eighteen. My mother’s family is from Sapporo. My father was a high school volunteer from Tokyo and was staying with my mother and her parents for two weeks. He seduced my mother, first getting her to share a bath with him (supposedly she washed his back the same way she had washed her father’s back) and then shared his bed, not once, not twice but three times in the two weeks during the 1972 Olympic.

My father was the first southerner that my mother had ever met and the first boy she had ever been intimate with. My father, on the other hand, had several

girl friends and was a *bon vivant* (a term that Rose taught me recently – she says that French boys are very much like that too).

When the Olympics were over my father left my mother without even saying a good bye.

All of this would have stayed a secret were it not for the fact that years later when my mother was going out with a Sapporo boy the two of them had a fight and she told him that '*he was not her first.*' Northern boys are not like southern Japanese boys. He got angry at her and before long my mother's reputation was in pieces.

What could my mother do? My Sapporo grandparents sought out my Tokyo grandparents and they came to an understanding that my father, having slept with my mother three times, he would have to marry her. In ancient Japanese culture when a man and woman shared a bed three times they were in fact married to each other. This practice still survives in the rural parts of Japan even today.

My mother and father were not too happy about this but it meant that my mother could leave Sapporo and go live in Tokyo. My father did not want to end his playboy life, but they still got married. My grandparents forced them to.

He was unfaithful to my mother many times in all the years of their marriage and she knew that. But my mother had no choice but to be patient and hope he would change. My mother tells me he never did.

It was many years before my sister and I came along. I was my mother's blessing and my father's curse. My mother was happy to have a baby daughter. My father less so! His mistresses started to tell him to grow up, go home and look after his family. He was cold to me when I was young.

A few years later my sister came along. The one and only trip we took together as a family outside of Japan was to Vancouver, when my father came to be interviewed for a job he did not get.

And then when I was twelve my parents separated, my sister going to live with my mother and me with my father. But that didn't work out well and so one day when I was fifteen I just packed my things and took the train all by myself to Sapporo and then stayed at my maternal grandparents for the summer. It had taken me many months to save enough money for the train ticket from Tokyo to Sapporo.

It wasn't that my father was bad to me. It was just that he was always traveling on business and had many mistresses who were not much older than me. They were usually secretaries and office workers he had met on his business trips that wanted to spend a few days in Tokyo. My father would let them stay with us. Oh, the stories I can tell of their visits!

I was lonely for my sister and mother. For the first time in several years I spent a summer with my mother and sister. My sister was ten and a tomboy. I was fifteen and the boys were taking an interest in me. My sister was better with the boys than I was and would hang out with boys my age.

At the time I thought if my mother only knew what mischief she got into. My sister went on hikes with them, and when she was too hot she would take off her shirt. She went fishing and was very good at it. When they went swimming, she would never brought her bathing suit. She even went into the onsen with them. By the time she was ten she knew more about boys than I did at fifteen. I suspect that the boys only took an interest in me only because of my sister.

At the end of that summer it was decided that I should stay with my mother, so my sister changed places with me and went to Tokyo for three years with my father. She was a bit wild in Tokyo. While I went to high school in Sapporo I had a boy friend. He was a sort of an Otaku, what you would call a nerd. I was a bookish girl as well. He and I went out on a few dates, but we were never intimate. We would talk about books and about modern film and about modern art. We would go to the films together. His favorite film was *Magic Serpent*.

After graduating high school with honors we broke up and I went back to Tokyo and my sister went back to Sapporo for her high school. I was surprised because my father was happy to have me back. He told me that my sister gave him gray hair. Things had not changed much for him.

I went to university for four years, and I had a boyfriend for a few months. But we did not stay together long. He wanted to bed me but I did not like him that much. He told me that I was the most frustrating woman he had ever known. When I asked him how many ‘women he had known’ ... he told me, and I dumped him then and there. He started to follow after me and call me Fukansho. With men I have not been lucky. First an otaku then a dinku! He got very angry at me and could not take no for an answer.

It was after I graduated from university that I took my second trip Vancouver with some friends. I went to get away from him and to improve my English. That is when I met two very nice people, Patrick and Rose. Patrick was very kind and nice to me and my traveling companions. There were seven of us in our group. When I left Vancouver I was very sad. I only met Patrick a few days before it was time for me to return home. I miss him very much ...

When I got back from Vancouver my sister was in Tokyo for her school holidays. She went out every night for two weeks. With some reluctance I joined her on a few of her evenings out. They turned out to be much more different than I imagined. She went to films with her friends, and some nice restaurants, but she never let a boy even put a hand on her. Every time a boy did something she didn’t like she dumped him on the spot. Then she would find a new boyfriend. I now understand her better than ever before. I was a fool to think that she was being promiscuous. In fact it was the complete opposite.

Both my mother and father knew me to be responsible and so they did not worry much about me. On the other hand they worried about my sister. So they told my sister that if she slept around she could not live under their roof. It was ironic they would be the ones to tell her that. It was my maternal grandmother who told her about what had happened to our parents. Then my sister told me.

One night when we had both gone out and our dates had disappointed us both we sat at a coffee shop talking about our growing up. It was then that we both realized neither of us had bedded ...so we both made a pact. We would find ourselves husbands who were kind and nice and perhaps like us (have waited until they were married). But in the meantime we would have as much fun as we could.

I told Rose about this and she did not believe me at first. She had bedded when she was in her teens and has had many lovers ... this is when she suggested her bet. She bet me I could not do something to flirt with our mutual friend in Vancouver.

I told my sister about Rose's bet and she came up with a funny way to win the bet. Patrick loves art. One of her 'good boyfriends' is an artist. My sister has been a model for him a few times. So she and I, and two of her friends, came to model for a drawing class in his studio.



My sister is the one looking at the camera. ... No I am not standing next to my sister! Isn't my sister beautiful?

Top this ... Rose!

The Mystery of the Gecko by Rain Li

[Shanghai] A person's attitude helps decide what they may become. In an unlikely circumstance, attitude is important and provides for a unique personality and meaning.

There was a Japanese family who were planning to renovate their house. They demolished a wall. The inside of a wall is usually empty in a Japanese house.

When they demolished the wall they found that a gecko was trapped within the wall. A nail from outside pinned through the gecko's tail. The owner of the house felt sorry for the gecko, but was also curious about it.

He looked at the nail carefully. The nail was put through the wall ten years ago when the house was built. How could it happen that the gecko could be trapped for ten years in the wall of the house? How could the creature have survived for so long? Here was a mystery!

The man was curious so he stopped the renovations and waited. Soon after, another gecko came out with food in its mouth. The action of the second gecko shocked and surprised the home owner. He couldn't believe what he saw. In order for the trapped gecko to survive so long the second gecko would have had to carry it food for the past ten years!

The home owner was moved by the thoughtful compassion of the second gecko. He couldn't imagine the relationship between the two creatures. Were

they family, friends or lovers? He walked out from the room and dismissed the workers. He locked the door and left the room for these two soulful creatures.

In life there can be some difficulties along the way. To a great extent the quality of our life depends on how we relate to others. We see that in the gecko that fed the one trapped in the wall for ten years. We see that it never gave up. One of the finest things we can do in our lives is to help others.

No greater love has one than this, to lay down your life for your friends.

John 15:13

Kitan Poetry

Poetry by Aki Kurosawa

What I Miss Most of All

You ask me, what I miss, most of all ...
It is to travel by train,
to far, far away ...
from where I live, in unhappy Tokyo,
and soak in an onsen, even with strangers,
far, far away ...
in the mountains somewhere,
where people know,
you are not from around here,
and point at you, and talk about you
without turning their backs.
I am so lonely that
I might even let a farm boy,
take me into the fields,
far, far away ...
and roll me in the hay
under the cold dark night sky
just to say to my friends
I still remember how to play.

You ask me ... what I miss most of all ...
It is how to be happy.

I Had a Pink Bike

When I was a little girl
I had a pink bike ...
the tires would spin and whirl.
I rode it everywhere I like –

I rode it very fast!
The boys would race me,
but almost always I'd be last
and I would watch them flee.

gaily laughing all the time at me ...
but I would just smile, thinking
how it must hurt to be a boy
bouncing on his bike ...

but a girl can whirl along on her's
and not mind it at all ...

Pumpkin the Cat

Pumpkin ... my chisana Neiko,
she use to wander across
the top of our fence.

Our chisai inu would bark, bark

bark at it – but my Pumpkin

she just ignored him. She knew
he had nothing important to say
to her as she went on her way.

The boy cats would try to
follow her across the fence –
but would get unnerved and topple off
and our dog would chase them away.
They would never come back again.

If you could not keep up with Pumpkin
... what use were you to her?

But Not Always!

At school we all wore
plain blue uniforms ...
every day, the same way –
but not always!

And underneath,
they were supposed to be all white,
but sometimes they were red,
or pink, or blue,

or yellow or black,
or no color at all ...

which was the best ...
don't you think?

If you had to sit every day,
The same way –
but not always!

What is my Body Trying to Tell Me?

My cracked seed,

my brown rice ...

my green wheat

my white soybean ...

my red sorghum

It starts to bleed,
whenever the farmers want
to furrow the ground

What is my body trying to tell me?

That the plow

can only furrow the soil
when nothing will grow?

Or should I let
the damned crows peck at me
whenever they feel hungry?

They Make a Rasp of it!

You see, I have these dreams ...
of being held down
against my will ...
and being tickled, here and there
and everywhere ...

But when I tell my
boyfriends what I dream about

... they just don't understand.

They make a rasp of it,
and turn my dream
into a nightmare.

Boys don't understand girls
... they just don't want to.

I have to bow and smile

Gray are the skies over Tokyo,
gray are the faces of the people
walking under the skies of Tokyo.

Gray are the socks I am wearing
gray are my dress and panties
that match the long socks that I am wearing

Gray is the color of my new desk at work
gray is the conversation I have
with my new boss at my desk at work.

Gray is the color of my computer screen
gray is the training film that explains everything
I need to do in my new job.

Gray is the uniform I have to wear
gray is the task I now have to do
but to keep it, I have to bow and smile.

A Salary Girl ... in a Salary World

I sit at my desk,

a salary girl ...
in a salary world

surrounded by salary men
who are probably
thinking
the same things
I am ...

There is the day me,
prim and proper,
and the night time me,
the complete opposite,
which comes out on
a Saturday ... at midnight.

Each day is the same
except Sundays ...
when I can sleep off
the night before.

Sometimes on Sundays
I wake up in my own bed
alone ... but, most times
I wake up somewhere else,
and can't find my panties.

I have a yen
for this other life
and if I wanted to ...
I could play my way,
one fancy trick at a time,
by working one night a week,
and sleeping it off ...
the other six.

That way I don't have
to sit at my desk,
a salary girl ...
in a salary world
surrounded by salary men.

Taking Things in Hand

Sometimes ... I let lil' sis
take me out
to meet some
of her chums ...

Oh boy!

There was sis and I

and four puppies,
all eager to play, yelping....

They tried to paw, paw, paw
their way up, into my dress ...
I was not impressed!

I pressed me knees tight together,
And held down my dress,
Then they tried up top.
There was no stopping them.

We six sat in a booth
at the back of a dark,
old restaurant,
far across town
where truckers gathered.

Those wretches eyed us hungrily.

And here I was trapped between
two yelping little chiens.
There was not much I could do,
until after we had eaten ...
I saw a gleam in sis' eyes
that told me why she had brought us here.

Four of them and two of us ...
we were there to give them a hand.

I watched from across the table
as she toyed with her boys
They looked down, went silent
closed their eyes ... and smiled

The two beside me watched too ...
and began to whimper, and whine.
...so did all the other wretches around the room

And so I too took things in hand.
Why not! It's a free world ...

Softly, slowly, I started
to pet these puppies.
Fresh out of the kennels.

But at least their whimpering
and whining had stopped.

They were not much to begin with,
Hardly there in fact,
with their big paws and little stiffs

but they sort of grew on you ...
these pups that squirmed and finally foamed

When we were finished
sis and I ... we dashed away
not having to worry about
puppies nipping at our heels.

I have to credit my sis,
she hasn't had to pay
for her lunch in years.

It is Going to be a Boy She Says.

Next month, my best friend,
she's having a baby.
She's much younger than me ...
just past her teens.

We use to work together
side by side. But last year
she lost her job,
then her boy friend too,
when she needed him the most,
(he's not the father),

and the baby's father ... well ...
she doesn't even know his name,
no one will tell her who he is,

they were both drunk
at the time they bumped
into each other...
and now she has sobered up.

I think I know ...
who the father is,
but can't tell her,
I may end up jobless too ...

It is going to be a boy she says.
She can feel his tiny pencil
ticking her from within,
writing her little haiku ...
reminding her,

she has no men
in her life,
except her father,
who wants to toss
them both into the streets.

She waits ...
with her grandmother now,
far away ...
somewhere in the country

Oh well ...
she and the little one
will at least have fresh air.

It is going to be a boy she says.
I hope it is a girl!

The School Boy on the Bus

There is a school boy
who takes the same bus
I do each day.
He would be just fourteen.

I would always
stand in a corner
far from the push of
people near the doors.

I let the boy press against
me when the bus sways,

his hand touching my bare thigh ...
but I don't mind.

One day ... a bump ... his hand
went up my dress. I could
tell he was nervous
by the warm, shaking of it.

I knew what he wanted ...
my panties were in my purse.
It surprised him when
he touched my wet flesh.

I somehow knew I was
his first when his hand froze,
so I pressed my thighs together
as we swayed in time.

I would not let
him go, until I had
had my pleasures of him ...
he closed his eyes.

My leg brushed against him.
He drew in a breath.
I pressed and the sway

of the bus took hold.

I found his zipper
And then his enpitsu ...
thin, long and unsheathed
and started to write with it.

And there we were
the two of us alone
in our own world,
traveling together ... then ...

It was my stop. I left him standing
there, with a wet hand
... his wet underwear
and a contented smile.

His Little Insignificance

My boyfriend looks so funny
standing there
 hanging out ...

That little insignificance that
means so much to him
 yet means so little to me.

A daikon ... brings me greater pleasure!

A green bean ... a bowl of Edamame.

I wonder if his
insignificance were stolen away
would he still want to play with me?

To love that place
where his insignificance seems
always to ... hasten ...

To tickle and caress me
To feast on my sweet Aoyagi ...

Instead of always wanting
to press his insignificance
into me like a bull
might press a cow to heff a calf.

It is his beef
that I just leave him
to stand and bray ...

milk me ...

milk me ...

milk me ...

And I am the cow?

Aki is always surprising us with the originality of her poetry, which is most times based on her fascinating love life. She recently parted ways with her latest boyfriend who had a rather big sense of his insignificance.

Aki is constantly reminded that men don't understand women the way they wish to be understood. To a woman intimacy and sexuality are not inevitably the same thing. To a man they are one and the same!

Boys think bigger is better. Little do her boyfriends know that the bigger their insignificance, the less enjoyable love making is for Aki.

If only they knew that the first third of a woman's *ai no ton'neru* feels any pleasure. The rest does not. Then they would not press their insignificance ...

Into me like a bull

Might press a cow to heff'a calf.

It was when *Seiko no saichu ni* (still being a bit shy, Aki wanted this left in the original Japanese) her boy friend started to snort like a bull as he pressed her off the bed with his insignificance.

A lamp was casting his shadow on the far wall of the bedroom, and to Aki he looked like a bull having it out with a cow.

She started to laugh hysterically at the whole silliness of the moment. The images of daikons, green beans and edamame suddenly flashed into her mind. So she pushed him out of her.

But still he would not stop his braying and snorting, so she milked him like a milkmaid would. After he came Aki told him to go, and not come back.

“Watashi wa ushide wa arimasen!”

Five Poems by Stephanie Cui

Dawn

Out in the moonlight
The trees are glowing white.
They are fully dressed and await the wind's call.

But the wind is a shy girl at four in the morning,
And she does not come out to play.
Dawn slowly tip-toes, blueing the sky.
I am lost on a path so familiar.

Does darkness lock up my eyelids
With a key that only belongs to dawn?
I sneak by buildings,
They seem unrealistic against the early light.
Windows lit here and there, like the fading stars.

My footsteps are shaky,
My voice –the only echo remaining in the world.
The sun rows the moon across the sky, claiming its throne.
And I step into the day drunk with awe.

Two Strangers

~ a palindrome poem

Two strangers
Returning to
Their respective homes
Both leaving for
The train that departs at dawn
Boarding amidst the morning fog
To another ordinary day
Through the long and weary journey
Both remain silent
Rather than talking to each other
They put on music in their earbuds
Until the twentieth day
After smiles and formal greetings
They resolve to small talks
Something is starting to change
They discover their similarities and many differences
Revealing their strengths and weaknesses
Wary of the future and afraid of moving forward
Suffocated by the fear of being alone
Day after day
They sit next to each other
Dozing off on each others' shoulders
On the late-night train
Sharing sorrow and joy

And they whisper secrets
They pour their souls out
And they learn to trust
Placing each other above themselves
Grateful that they are
Boarding the same train
Two strangers who happened to be
At the right place
At the right time
A love story
Now begins ...

Spaceship

The sun peeks through the branches
as I walk down the shallow steps of the forest trail.
I hide my sandals in the tree trunk's shadow,
going barefoot, my skin burns against the golden sand.

I trace around the ruins of the castles
like the last soldier on guard in her homeland.
My eyes sparkle when I see the ocean at its full length.

The sky is a cloudy lens
between the ocean and the universe.
I think of the routine of waves, their silver edges,

of starfish on the rocks by the shore,
and of meteors' tails catching fire.
I connect the dots of stars to form an island.

A ship slowly dissolves into the light,
and emerges out of the planet Earth.
I count for the spaceship to take off.

Pieces of Time

I opened my silver pocket watch, it ticks like
A girl's high-heels down a school hallway.

The watch is a delicate piece of art, inside and out:
A tiny train on its face brings me back to a moment
In my dream.

I dream that I'm at a train station,
Hidden in the crowd,
I am alone.

I recognize no one, they pass by so fast,
They hardly notice me.

The sky's at its most beautiful stage,
When it will

But not yet darken.

I climb to the highest point of the world,
And people become raindrops
Dissolve into the moving waves below.

I wave frantically, I yell,
My hands are too shaky to grab their attention.
I wish for someone to comfort me.

But no,
People are catching trains to their dreams,
Caught up on journeys to Wonderland.

Time crawls down and kisses my palms lightly,
There I realize her lips have gone still.

I am running in a field with open arms

I am running in a field on my bare feet
The paddies all bend their heads
still green and raw
Autumn is months apart
I cannot wait for the golden waves to roar
and I don't want to fall
(unless you're there to catch me)

I am running in a field with my flowing hair
was it the wind or
is my head under water?
From each curl there dangles a star
Jewels I picked out just for my feathers
A beautiful creature like Medusa
(I will dazzle you with my glare)

I am running in a field with open arms
The sun went down for me long ago
In my last letter I confessed to her
how I dream of
Sunset forever
she granted me this wish because
(I turned myself into a shooting star)

I am running in a field beneath the purple sky
your reflection in my eyes
waltzing with the flowers
I think I'm running towards thin air
Is this how to disappear?
A piece of the world will fit into my arms
(and bestill the rumbling of my heart)

Two Poems by Kylin Li

Star

Anxiously sitting in a car
yelling *drive quicker, quicker!*
In my hand, holding a star
on the card, a sparking sticker
written with *To my dear little brother.*

The house turning into my sight.
Asking my mom where he slept
The room was quiet, with not much light
first sight on the crib, he was asleep.
Kissing his forehead, waiting beside,

my little angel, he finally woke up.
Our first eye contact made baby cry, soon mother came
Patting him hoping he would continue his nap.
Mommy's lovely voice, softly calling his name—
a warm hug from her was all he needed.

After a while, laying in mommy's arms, the baby boy
stopped crying and started to laugh.
Within his hand a little star-shaped toy
held tightly, just like his precious giraffe

These toys were (now) placed in his very secret box—

A small paper bag, carried round him close.

He believed that secrets would not be taken,
after they had been put into his bag. Although most
were lost, not by others, the toys were forgotten,
by the little boy, after another interesting thing

had been found...

When I Was Growing Up

When I was growing up,
as a kid, with my grandma,
calling her name once in a while,
worried that she might forget me,
along the trees, these leaves
of the Chinese toon, placed in my
bucket, with mulberry laying beside.

When I was growing up,
as a kid, with my grandma,
fishing beside the river, in the park.
She and I put on the fishing bait
together. We listened to the sound,

the waves crashed onto the beach
the fishes struggled in the bucket.

When I was growing up,
as a kid, with my grandma,
the pancophonous¹ kitchen, she stands still,
like a great hero at war. Her hands,
change those odd foods, into dainties
and these motive me to cook.

When I was growing up,
as a kid, with my grandma,
I was lucky, to have her
like that.

pancophonous¹: the cacophony made out of pots and pan.

The Creative Vessel of the Human Mind by Wing Wing Fung

our ability to design,
to create, and imagine a reality
that is only true to us.
what are visual senses
perceive is often differed
from the reality of what we see.
for it is thoughts that create
our perception of reality.
with our eyes closed,
we can imagine another dimension,
a world, built on ideas seen
and exposed to once before,
or flowery experiences
that have been carefully dissected
to ease into a chamber of our minds.
that is the kinds own ability
to mentally hallucinate
a comforting altered form of a stress
reducing haven that we can hide to.
we often imagine and day dream
when we are not fully in the present.

could it be at the silent contemplations
of those hours we are alone,

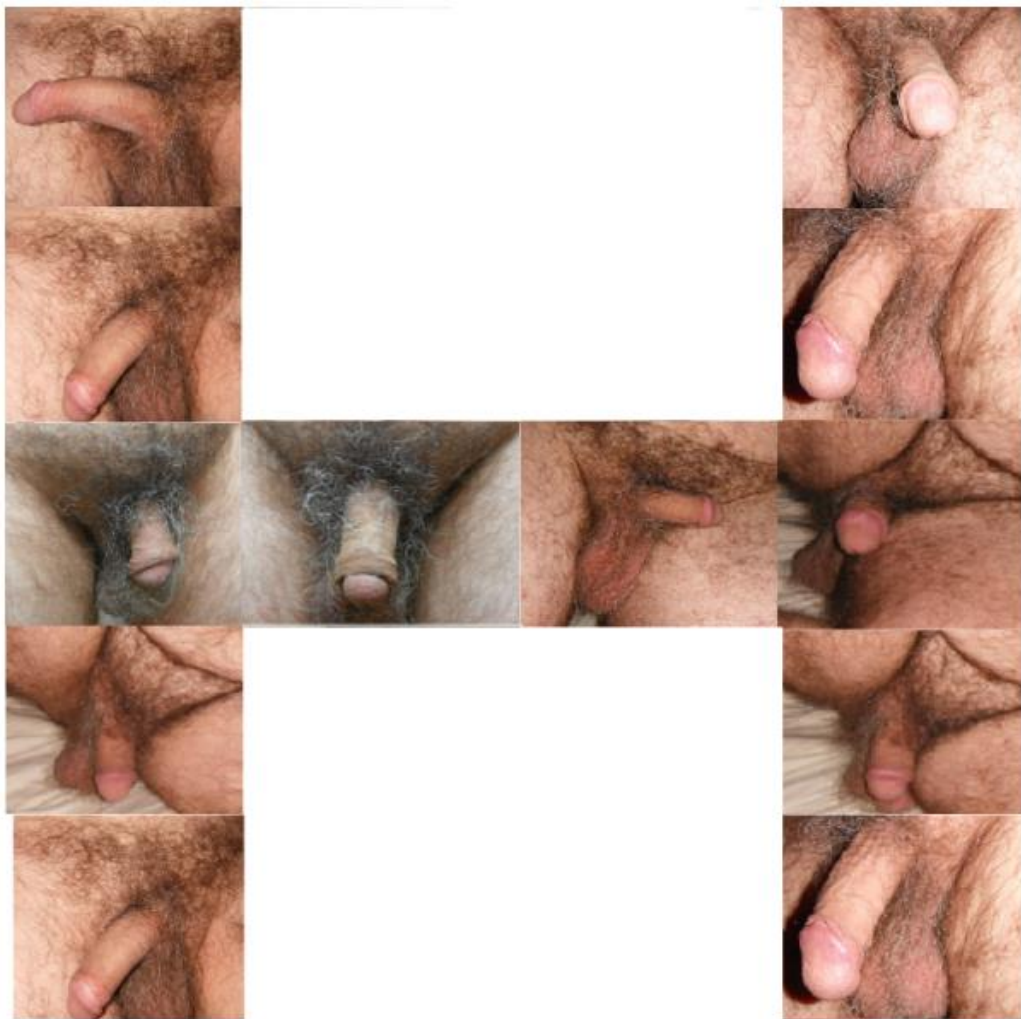
looking forward to yesterday's
overstimulation of reality?

Kitan Art

Some Fun my Sister Has ... by Aki's Sister

Full title: Some Fun my Sister Has ... Boys and Their Toys

My sister calls boy's penises their toys. She is a self-professed voyeur and enjoys watching boys play with their toys. Sometimes she also takes photographs of them ... These are some of the toys





Some Fun I Have Had by Keiko

This is a picture I took of an artist friend of mine. Is it a boy or a girl?



And what about this ... his Twig and Berries ...



Kitan Photography

Pictorial of the Ama of Onjuku by Yoshiyuki Iwase

Story by Aki Kurosawa

[**Tokyo**] The village of Onjuku, about three hours' train ride from Tokyo, is one of the score of small villages where the men sweep the sea for the fish that is a staple commodity in Japanese diet. But its womenfolk are not the kind to weep while the men work. When the fishing-boats go to sea, Onjuku's women aged from 14 to 60 spend a full day diving for pearls, shell and edible seaweeds in the icy Pacific waters off-shore.

Work begins at sunrise, ends at sunset when the women "man-handle" their heavily timbered boats from the surf, drag them to security on the beach. The work is so laborious that divers must eat five meals a day to maintain their energy. The waters in which they hunt are so cold that they have to make frequent trips to the beach to warm their bodies by a fire. Older brothers and sisters take care of the babies while the mothers are at work.

Onjuku, the village where these half-naked women are to be found is becoming a tourist attraction. Beginning in the 1920's the photographer Yoshiyuki Iwase (1904-2001) took photographs to record the toil and beauty of the Ama of Onjuku. Iwase was born and grew up in Onjuku. Iwase was given his first camera at age 16.

If Iwase started at age sixteen, why couldn't I. I asked my grandmother for a camera and when she gave me one of my grandfather's old cameras I began

to take pictures of my own (there are some of my more recent pictures in the Art section of my book).

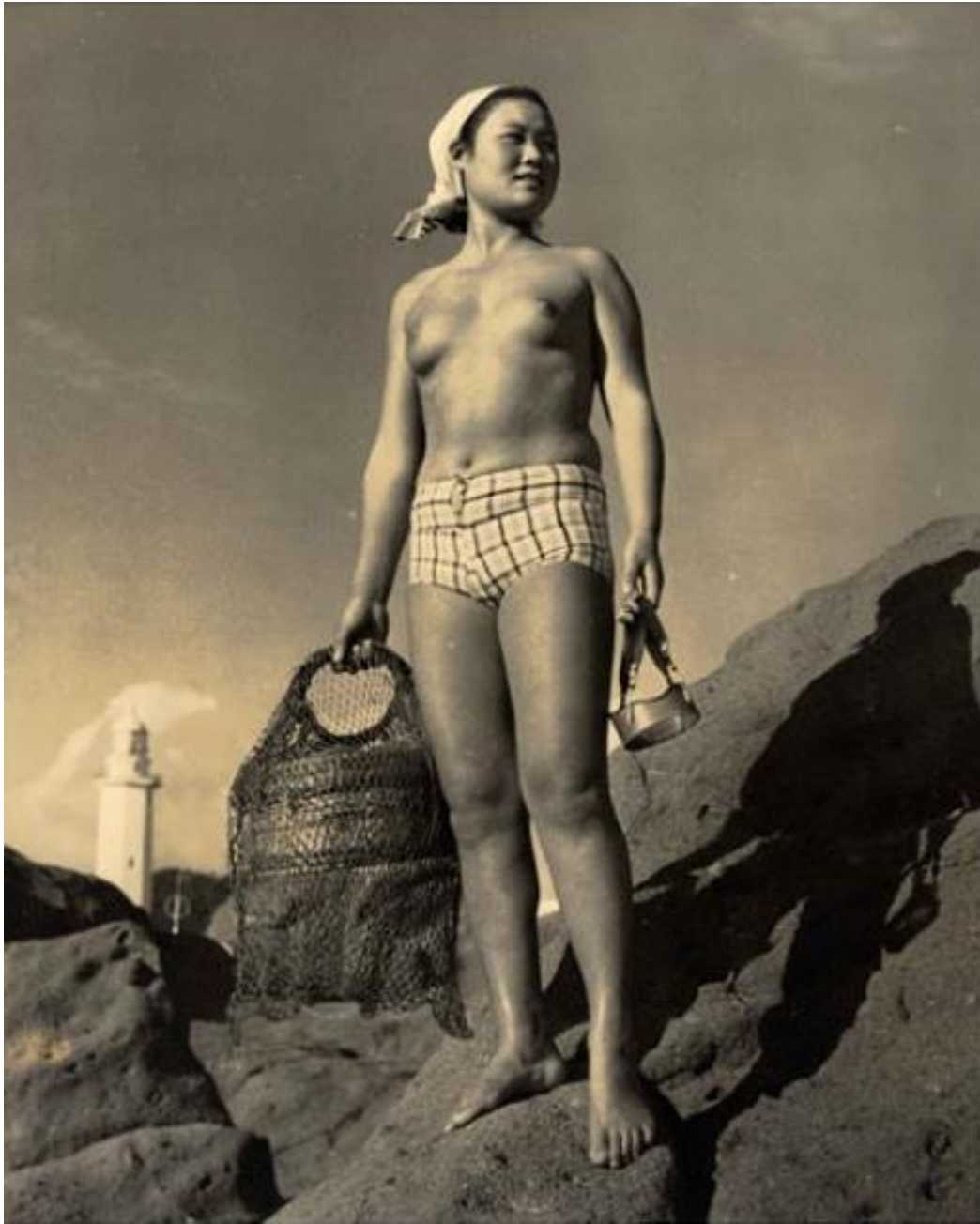
When she gave it to me, my grandmother asked me promise I would keep the camera a secret from my parents. To this day my parents do not know I like to take photographs.

Even my little sister does not know this (when she reads this she will find out).

My parents like to say how my little sister is keeping the familial photography heritage alive. I wonder if my parents know what my grandmother and I keep as a familial secret ... about what my grandfather really like taking pictures of!

By the way, my grandfather became friends with Yoshiyuki Iwase. The collections of pictures in the box was given to my grandfather by Iwase, with a note saying “this gift is to my friend and fellow photographer ...”

Shigoto chu no Ama (Ama at work)







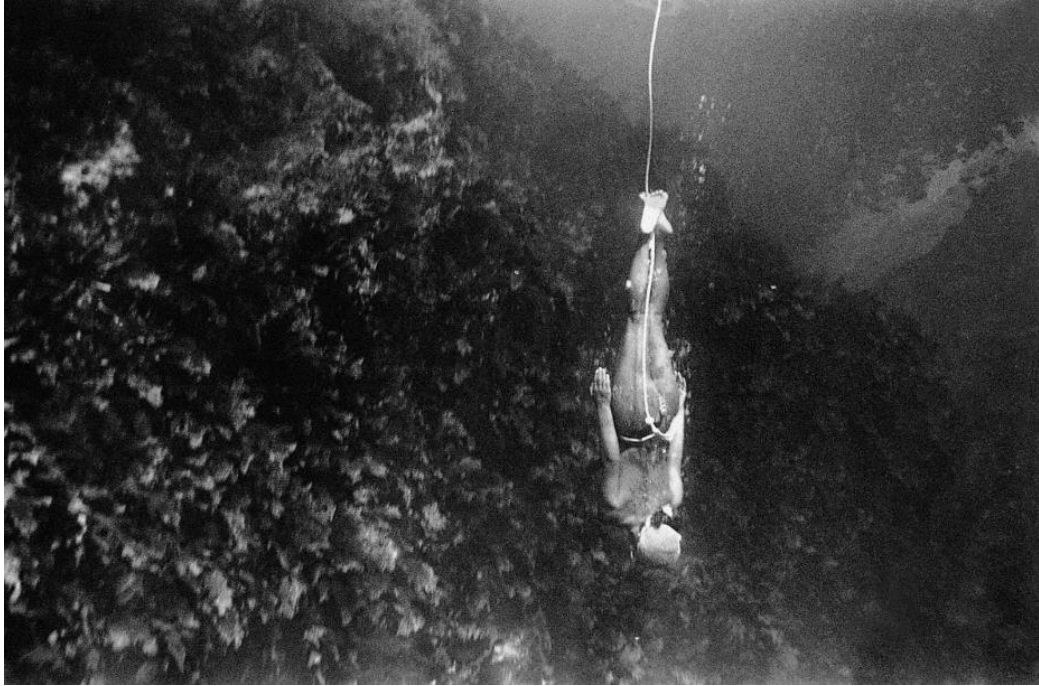










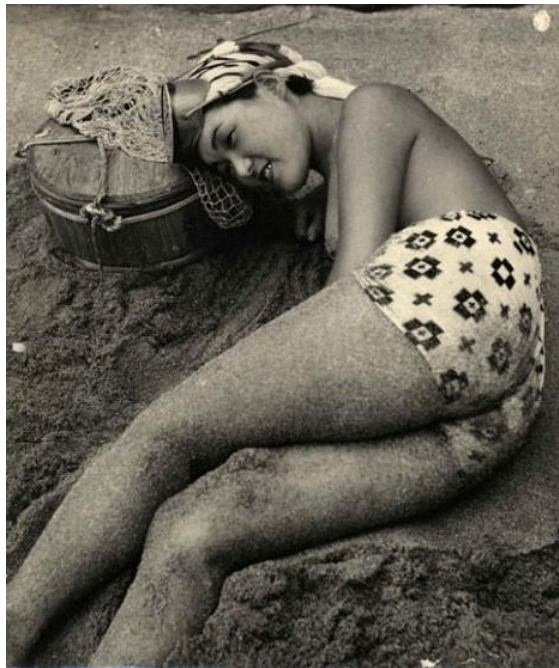
























Figuratives by Iwase





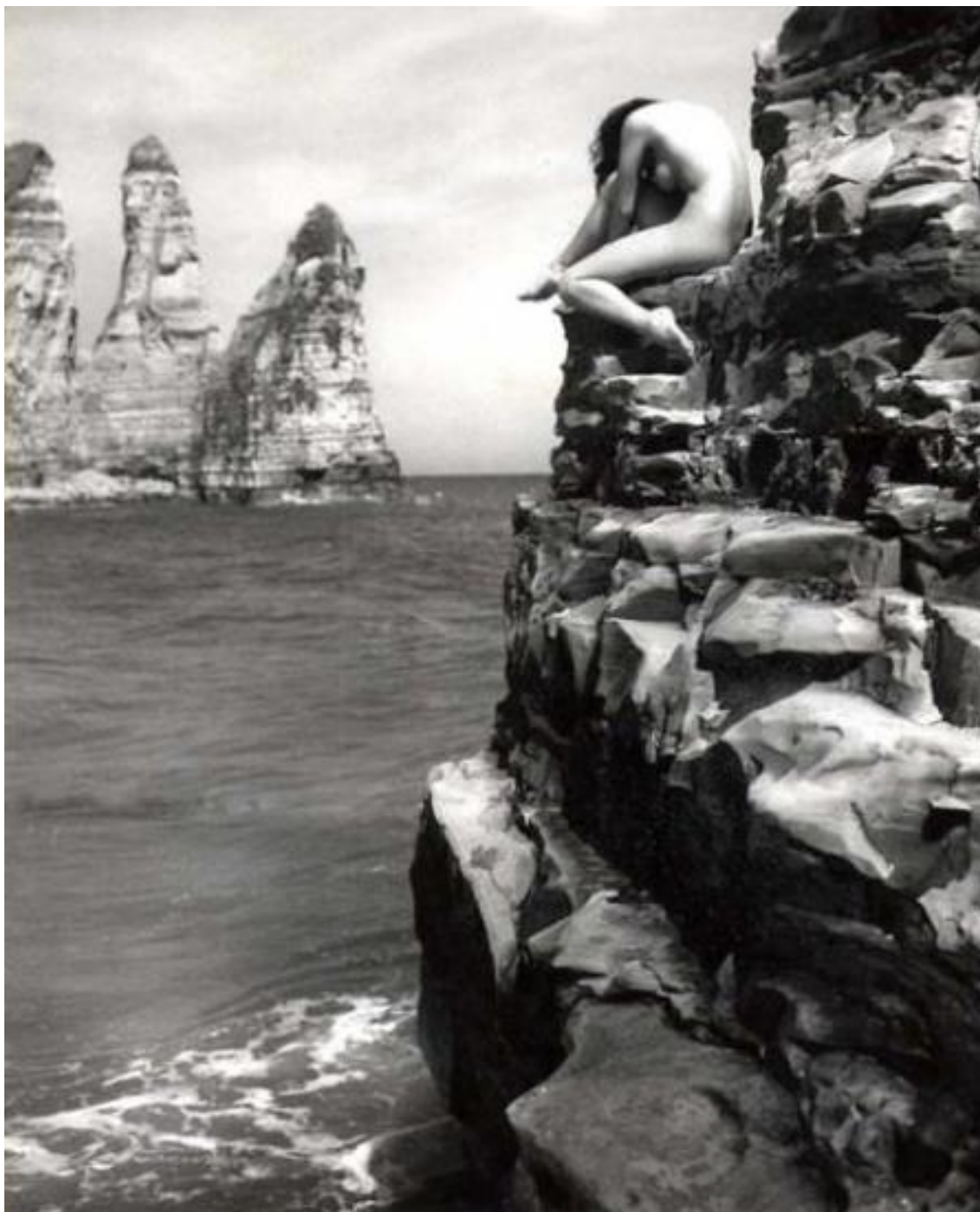




















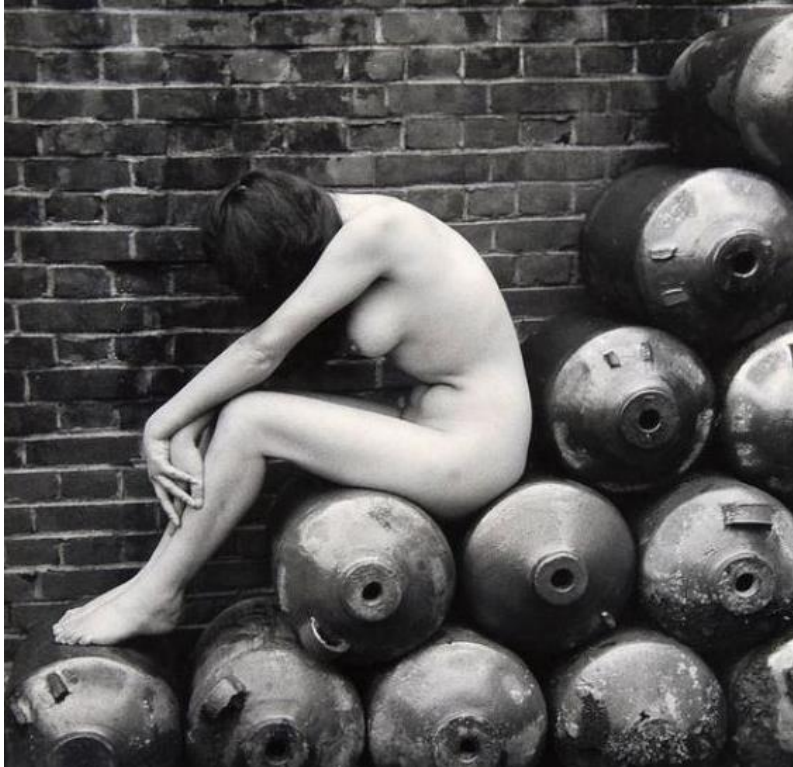






























Why it's called a Pussy ... by Aki Kurosawa



I was twelve at the time and had heard some high school boys say to a girl ... ‘show us your pussy’. This was the first time I heard this slang word ... Why is a girl’s vulva called a pussy? I wondered.

When I got home from school that day I knew not to ask my mother. I sat on my bed petting my cat pumpkin, looked at her face and wondered.

When you look at a woman's vulva ... does it really look like a cat?



Over many years I have searched and searched for the reason why a woman's privates is called a pussy only to find I just needed to ask my sister this question ... she knew the answer.

She seems to know all the answers when it comes to sex and urban slang!

Instead of just telling me she decided to show me ... she had done a film with her then boy-friend in which well ... she doesn't leave much to the imagination. There she was sitting in a white dress on a white chesterfield in a room with white ... white ... white.

My sister is not shy in any way ... unlike me, who would never ever think of doing a film like this ... I found it hard to watch the film and well even though I knew what my sister looked like it was a long seven minutes before she said ... now watch this!

When the time was right she took some snaps from the film. Here they are:



I wanted to look away but my sister would not let me.

‘Watch,’ she said, ‘... see why it is called a pussy!’

‘Look what happens when you pull your lips apart,’ (I have never really thought of looking at myself in a mirror ... my sisters, naturally, has!)



‘Can you see the pussy cat’s nose, her eyes and mouth?’ she asked me.



‘Can you see my pussy? He’s grinning ... I can make it meow,’ she said, and lifted her lips.



And then she made it meow.





OMG! We couldn't stop giggling. *'I wanted to do a film about my boy friend and his toy, but we couldn't find anything as funny as this to do with him.'*

It was a bit crazy but my sister insisted I let her take a picture of mine. Being a bit more modest than she is, this is how the picture turned out.



I keep mine in its natural state and hidden away.

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